The Black Cat

March 1909

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makes beautiful

FOR TOILET AND BATH

The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

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Nathan.*

BY C. STEPHEN BRADD.

IT was, I think, on the 6th day of December, at my farm near Ladysmith, South Africa, that the letter arrived from Sir Arthur Meredith. Sir Arthur and I had been very close friends for many years, indeed, ever since early Oxford days, and a letter from him with news of himself was always very welcome. But this letter contained little about himself. After a conventional line or two, he entered on the business which was evidently the main purpose of his letter:

> I wish to announce to you that I am sending you a present. You will be rather perplexed when you hear what it is. And yet I make bold to say beforehand that it is the most valuable present I have ever made you. It is nothing more than a servant — a black servant — I might say a slave, but I know how you dislike the term. His name is Nathan. He has been with me for some time as a very close body-servant. I picked him up in the interior, on one of my expeditions, about four years ago. My only recommendation of him is that I have never had nor seen any body-servant whose fidelity would bear a comparison with his. And this, too, is my only ground for asserting the superior value of this gift to you. I emphasize the *only* ground, because, to tell you the truth, this one gift — a golden one indeed — fidelity, begins and ends the list of our Nathan's accomplishments; since he is, first of all, deformed and furiously ugly; secondly, he is stone dumb, and is acquainted with only the most

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> meagre sign-language; and, thirdly, he is endowed with positively nothing more than the merest animal wits (if the term isn't a contradiction) and I am convinced he was born this way.
>
> I pause for a moment while you gasp away your astonishment, and read these lines over again, and fret with impatience to ask me ten questions of explanation. I answer all those questions at once by repeating what I said about the fidelity of Nathan. I have nothing but this to emphasize. I must add, too, that Nathan is becoming somewhat unfit to stay with me. He is growing old, and you know what a flying-camp life I and my "followers" live from year to year. I know he will have a quiet, comfortable home at your place near Ladysmith. Let me repeat once more that I am sure Nathan will be of the greatest value to you. And, indeed, if experience should prove anything to the contrary, do not hesitate to send Nathan back to me at once.

After all this followed some instructions, detailed with care, about sending to Ladysmith to receive Nathan when he arrived and escort him home. Then Meredith's letter ended abruptly; but this was not *quite* the end, for a postscript was added, containing only a line or two, and reading as follows :

> By the way, if it should happen for any reason that you should grow so interested in Nathan that you would like to be informed about his birth and antecedents, write me, and, as soon as I can reach you by mail, I will let you have all the information you wish in that line — family history, lineage, pedigree, etc., etc.

Such was his letter. And it puzzled me quite a little. It was not the fact of his sending me one of his cast-off blacks. I knew he kept a perfect horde of these, who followed him on his long expeditions in the cause of his science, which was in the naturalist line — I might remark here that in the last few years, since the writing of this memoir, Sir Arthur's contributions have received very distinguished notice — but, as I say, it was not the sending me one of his swarthy followers that made me wonder. It was his making such a time over it. He might have settled it in a line and a half, and then gone on with a few scraps of news about himself — especially since his letters were such rare luxuries to me, — but to devote an entire letter for the purpose of telling me that he was sending me a withered, worn-out Ethiopian — that seemed rather strange. I thought I was through it all, however, after a little reflecting. This black had probably done him some remarkable service, saved his life, perhaps — which was not at all unlikely in the midst of snake-jungles and with frequent brushes with in-

land tribes. And now the faithful old fellow was growing old, and toothless, and Sir Arthur had some delicacy about letting him fall into any chance hands, and wanted to find a place where he could turn him loose to graze out his last few years in peace and with kind treatment. So Sir Arthur settled on me at my farm near Ladysmith. I didn't feel at all offended at this liberty. I was willing to take the old fellow and feed him and treat him kindly. But what I couldn't see was why Meredith did not speak out honestly, and say that all he wanted was to provide a quiet asylum for his old black, instead of regaling me with all this nonsense about sending me a present and so on.

Then when it came to that postscript, the mystery deepened for a moment. How in the name of everything civilized could I ever grow so interested in a black servant as to inquire about his pedigree! Then the whole thing brightened into a joke. Meredith was making a little quiet game of me, from a safe distance in his solitary jungle camp. I tried to smile it off — but it did not entirely satisfy me, and I looked forward with some little curiosity to the arrival of this acquisition to my household.

I remember that I sent two of my fellows into Ladysmith next day, with full directions as to the taking charge of the invaluable Nathan. Meredith was sending in that month a large party of his followers to the Natal metropolis, as he did two or three times a year, to purchase supplies of all kinds for him, after which they would, by making an overland journey of some hundred and fifty miles, join him again in the interior. With this party Nathan was to arrive. It was not until evening — for they rested during the mid-day hours to escape the sun, that the ox-cart returned from town. I was taking supper alone on the veranda when one of the servants announced that the new man had arrived. I answered that I would be ready presently, and, after leisurely finishing my supper, I strolled over to the "quarters" to have a look at the new arrival. There he was standing at the entrance of one of the cabins, leaning rather lazily against the door post. The first thing about him that impressed me was his appearance of extreme age. I had expected a man, not in the bloom of youth (for his usefulness was supposed to have gone), but here was even a trifle more than I had looked for. He seemed literally crushed with the

weight of years. He was stooped so low that I think it would have been physically impossible for him to get down any lower and remain on the soles of his feet. Then his whole form gave me the strong impression of extreme shrunkenness. His wrists protruding from his sleeves were fleshless sticks, while his trousers flapped in a peculiar way, which made me feel painfully the thinness of his legs.

I smiled a little grimly to myself as I took in these details. "The value of Meredith's gift does not precisely dawn on me yet," I muttered. "As far as I can see, this old chap will have to be treated with gruel and a soft bed at once — while we get a cedar box ready for him in the near future. Why, he hasn't strength enough to pull a long breath."

As I drew quite near to him the old fellow raised his head. His face had been entirely hidden, partly by his broad-brimmed hat, which belongs to the outfit of a South African open-air negro, and partly by the inclination of his form which, as I said, was extreme, — but now I caught a fair look at it. And what a face! Meredith was certainly mild in merely calling him ugly. It was — well — the most hideous face I had ever seen. "Age has certainly used you up badly," I thought. The face seemed to be made up of wrinkles, like a piece of loose shrunken leather. But that wasn't the only disfigurement. Everything there was made in the worst possible way; the eyes were small and bearish; the nose was beaten flat; while the nostrils were large and for all the world like ugly bullet-holes. The mouth was very broad, with a protruding upper and lower jaw. But I can't describe him. I can only say he was certainly furiously ugly — inhumanly ugly!

I stood looking at him for a few seconds without manifesting any surprise, as the matter of his personal looks was a rather indifferent one to me. Then I endeavored to put on as cheerful a tone as I could, and said something about being glad to see him and that I hoped he would be satisfied here. At once I was reminded about his being dumb, and the possessor of the minimum of wits. He looked at me with the blankest possible stare, and merely gave me a kind of grunt — meaningless enough.

And then there happened what I could no more explain to myself at the time, than I could have flown with wings. As I stood,

with my eyes fixed upon the old black, a feeling of intense revulsion and disgust for him took hold of me so strong that it almost shook me with its vehemence. I am the most phlegmatic man in the world, and yet that feeling for a moment seemed to control me absolutely — the shrinking as well as the loathing inspired by that poor old deformed creature. I felt for a second as if I should in duty wipe him off from the face of the earth. I remember distinctly how my hand reached towards the heavy revolver which I carry at my side, and then how, as my folly flashed upon me, I tightened my belt to cover up the gesture. I did not stand debating long; but turned sharp on my heel and walked back to the house. As I walked, I began to ask myself (for I was calmer now) what it was about the old fright that made my gorge rise so. I found it hard, indeed, to explain. It was not, I was sure, that I saw treachery or villainy of any kind in him. No, it was nothing like that ! It was more like the feeling a man has when he is awakened in the jungle by having a slimy lizard crawl across his face and he stamps on the reptile to relieve his disgust. "Certainly you were never stirred up so before by mere bad looks," I muttered to myself. My teeth were chattering with the shudder that was still on me.

That evening, as I sat in my study, my eye fell on Meredith's letter, which lay on the table. Its connection with the day's incident made me pick it up and read it over. When I came to the place where he emphasized the ugliness of his Nathan, I smiled and thought I saw rather far into his design. Meredith's joke was to send me a black so ugly that I should be filled with the "creeps" at the sight of him, and then be forced to send him back after a siege of bad dreams. "And to think that he's half succeeded already, — but I'll play a little counter game," I said.

Then I took up my pen and wrote a brief letter to Meredith, announcing the arrival of his gift, and remarking that he need not have spoken in so depreciatory a way about the old fellow's looks, as I had often seen worse. I declared I was glad to have him, and would find some use for him. So this was the way in which Nathan began life on my South African farm. It was a tame beginning, but wait until you hear the end.

The next morning, as I sat at my late breakfast, I was rather

surprised to hear Sam, who always stood behind my chair, mutter something about Nathan. I turned and asked him what he had to say about him.

"Oh, nuthin', sir," he answered, "only you thought that Nathan he fit for no work. He doin' first-class work. Uncle Abe (that was my overseer) set him goin' with the hoe early this morning. That Nathan he got some go in him yit."

This roused me a little, because I suspected that they had acted a little high-handedly with the aged new-comer; and not liking to have him do nothing to earn his bread, had forced some work on him in spite of his weakness. I said no more; but after my breakfast, I sauntered over to the garden, as we called it, where there was about an acre and a half which we kept under cultivation and in which we raised fresh vegetables to supply the house. It was separated from the farm, and I generally detailed a special man, when I could spare one, to take care of it.

It was in one corner of this garden acre that I recognized my Nathan busily engaged in turning up the loose turf with a hoe. I approached him quietly, and whether he saw me or not he gave no sign whatever, but went ahead silently and steadily. It was somewhat fascinating to watch him, — the long, almost rhythmical swing with which he drew the hoe backwards and forwards, his body following the motion. But what made me almost start with surprise was the impression of strength which he conveyed, — the ease with which the instrument passed through the heavy clods, cutting them or throwing them aside — the accompanying swing of his body from the waist, all made me exclaim to myself that there was some suppleness and force left in that old, withered body. "Sam was right," I muttered, "there is some go in him yet. I will let them keep him at work for a time to see how he stands it." I did not remain there long watching. I had an all-morning business in the shape of a ride to a neighboring farm and back again in time for lunch.

When I returned, about noon, and as I rode in past the garden patch on my way to the stable, I saw a familiar figure standing in the furrows using his hoe with long, steady sweeps. I could not believe it at first. I shaded my eyes with my hand and looked sharp at it. Yes, it was certainly Nathan. I whistled, and Sam

ran out of the stable yard where he had been waiting for me. As he took my bridle I asked him, "Has Nathan been at that all the morning?"

"Yes, indeed, sir," answered Sam, "I declare I don't believe he has looked up once. I told you, sir, he got plenty of go left in him yet." This moved me considerably. I did not think about the endurance part of it. What struck me was the unselfish fidelity of the old fellow. All the hands used to stop at the end of two or three hours, take a drink, and wear away some time in chatting and lounging before going back to work; but for him to keep on steadily from early morning with not a pause, and on his first day, old and dried as he was!

Well, I just jumped down, let Sam take my horse while I walked straight over to Nathan, and laid my hand on the hoe, expressing as strongly as I could that he was to stop work for the present. He let go the tool like a child, and then stood there waiting for me to order him. He looked much more old and feeble again. His shoulders slouched forward, his back was bent, — of course he was tired, too, after a whole morning's work without a pause. I plucked him by the sleeve, motioning him to come with me. We made our way to the kitchen, where I called the cook and told him to bring some of the meat and vegetable porridge he was making. He brought some in a deep dish, which I set before Nathan. I then ran and got a loaf of wheat bread — the kind that was reserved for my use — and set that before him, too. He was still standing, so I forced him into a seat and pulled off his wide-brimmed straw hat, motioning him towards the eatables. He turned his ugly face up at me for a few moments, and then dropped down to the porridge.

And it was then — then, as the poor old hungry wretch bent over his food — that I felt the wave of that strong revulsion sweep over me again. It was awful. It seemed to reach down into the depths of me. I actually felt like seizing something heavy and coming down hard on the back of his neck — it was well exposed as he leaned over his bowl — and killing him like some unclean dog that you have found thieving in your house. I got out of the room as suddenly and speedily as I could, and almost shouted to myself in vexation, "What, in the name of reason, is the matter

with you?" But I couldn't begin to answer the question, or even state fairly to myself what I meant by it. I only know that four times I looked convulsively back over my shoulder, and my forehead was damp with sweat, and a peculiar chill ran down my spine. I kept muttering through my clenched teeth, "fool! fool!" but it was no use.

The spell did not last long, however, and it had passed off completely when I had reached my study and was settled down to work at my accounts — a long, tedious job. In fact, I was so disgusted with myself at being worked up — a rare occurrence with me — over nothing, that the whole matter left my mind entirely; and when Uncle Abe, my overseer, entered my room that evening with a troubled face, I never guessed for a moment what he wanted. But he came to the point at once.

"I want to speak to you, sir, about that new man, Nathan, I think his name. I declare, sir, I can't work when he's 'round. And the other men, they think the same way. They most determined, sir, and they all declare, sir, they leave at once if you ask 'em to work with him." For once I was knocked completely out of countenance by a servant. I stammered, "But, — but what's the matter with him, Abe? Do you think he's a bad man?" Here I noticed the slaty paleness of Abe's face and the suppressed quaver in his tone.

"'Tain't that, sir; 'deed I can't say what it is. But I never seed no signs o' bad in him. He's a very good steady worker — wonderful enduring for sich an ole man. But being that as it is, I can't stay near him, so I don't blame the others."

I sat for a few minutes without a word; but then I became suddenly ashamed of my perplexity in Abe's presence, and I dismissed him with a promise to do something the next day. When I was left alone with my own thought, my sense of the folly of it all came strongly back to me. And to think, too, that I shared in the folly of my ignorant black servants. How laughable it was!

I found a way out of the embarrassing part of the affair by determining to confine Nathan in his work to the garden acre, which was enough to keep him busy, and by assigning him to an isolated room in the quarters, where he could sleep. I assured myself that time and familiarity would make him more agreeable to his fel-

low-workers. "As to myself," I thought, "I'll always be kind to the old unfortunate. It seems bitterly hard to be isolated in that way on account of a face nature has given one."

And I always did treat him kindly. It made me warm towards him still more when I rode by his field every morning and saw him diligently and stoically bending to the swing of his long hoe. I would sometimes shout a greeting as I passed, trusting that he would divine from my tone what my intention was. Sometimes I brought some fruit back in my saddle-bags and I would toss him a ripe mango or two or a banana. But I never attempted any closer intercourse with him. The memory of my two severe experiences kept me at a distance; — and then there was something, *something,* about him which, though I constantly denied it to myself, made me breathe just a trifle freer when I was out of his sight and vicinity.

And so six weeks passed. It is strange when I think of it now — how at the end of those six weeks that old black had so constant a place in my thoughts. One reason for this, probably, was the pronounced aversion of the men for him, which I thought might decrease, but which, on the contrary, only seemed to grow stronger. Another explanation was, undoubtedly, the peculiar character of my position. There I was, a solitary old settler, with little outside my farm to interest or occupy me.

At any rate, the fact was I sat in my study at the end of the six weeks turning over the problem in my mind, and sifting it and sounding it and turning it over again for a solution. What was there about this poor harmless black that inspired the most intense disgust and aversion even in the rough negro laborers, who, at least here in South Africa, are not particularly delicate of feeling? They were certainly not so very far his superiors in the line of looks. But *was* it merely ill-looks that repelled him? Here I was brought sharply to a standstill, and the problem took a personal form. *Was it only his ill looks that repelled me?* I avoided answering my own question, and my eyes wandered hopelessly about the room, finding their way to the table at last where the letter from Meredith was still lying. Mechanically I opened it and read it again — the third time now — and when I came to the postscript at the end I thought I saw a faint hope of solution

for my difficulty. I sat down and penned a second letter to Meredith, in which I frankly confessed my mystification and begged for any information he had concerning the past history, pedigree or anything connected with Nathan that might possibly lead me to a solution of my problem. I sent the letter off the same day, which proves, if I should doubt it now, my impatience in the matter.

Then I remember I dreamed that night that Nathan was discovered to be the son of an ancient king who had ruled over one of those cities in the heart of Africa, the magnificent remains of which are the wonder of the explorer and the archæologist. He belonged to a distinct, a superior race; no wonder ordinary men were out of sympathy with him, were repelled from him. Only his race must have been one in which the type of beauty was different, radically different, from any yet discovered. This I remarked to myself as I pondered seriously on my dream.

Here I ought to begin a new chapter because I have to talk now in so different a strain. You have heard of nothing so far but of peace, and the sleepiest kind of peace it was, without a ripple to disturb its serenity, nor anything on the horizon in which one could read the indication of even a light blow. But now, of a sudden, there came rumors of war, dark ominous rumors, to disturb the evenness of our placid, lazy life.

The government of South Africa was on the very verge of trouble with the Zulus. An outbreak was looked for at any time.

I wonder whether any one who has not lived in South Africa knows what Zulu means. You will say he is nothing more nor less than a species of negro savage who wears very little clothes, carries a shield and an assegai in battle. But did you know that this negro savage has qualities which place him on a level with the most splendid civilized troops that the world can show? Much has been said about the valor and efficiency of the British infantry man. Without questioning this, let me offer it as my opinion that a single Zulu, with his bare hands, is a match for three of these British infantry men armed with rifle and bayonet,—let him but get within hand-grip of them. For he'll take their bullets into his body and still have strength and vitality enough left to dash their heads together and smash them like egg-shells.

And as for cool, restrained courage, I have only to call up that memorable picture of the awful fight at Isandhlwana, when up against those English lines advanced the crescent-shaped column of King Cettiwayo's warriors, dense, silent, each man (with the exception of a few inefficiently armed with muskets) bearing no other weapons but the long ox-hide shield on his arm, and in his right hand the fearful short-stabbing assegai. No way of striking at a distance, no way of silencing the enemy's deadly fire until they had him within arm's length of that dreadful spear. History tells, I say, how that brown, silent column advanced that day; how the English, in the fever of desperation, poured their withering volleys, mingled with charges of grape, into that line and tore great gaps in it; and how the warriors closed them with a calmness and steadiness that Europe's best infantry have often failed to show, and pressed forward slowly, silently, without a cheer, without a sound, up to the very muzzles of the guns and then—history tells, too, of the awful end of that gallant British regiment when the Zulu assegai had done its work and had its vengeance. But this is only a little amplification of what the term Zulu means to one who has lived in the South of Africa or has studied a little of its history.

Well, as I was saying, or started to say, it was about this time that rumors began to be current of trouble between the Cape Colony authorities and King Cettiwayo, and no one would have been surprised any day to hear of an open collision, we knew so well the temper of the two parties. For myself, the rumors never bothered me much, first, because I was extremely lazy and my whole nature resisted being worked up over anything; and, secondly, because I did not feel that even in the event of war there was any grave danger to me or my dependents. It is true my place was within easy reach of any wandering band of marauders, but they would have little reason for harming us. There was little, too, here in the way of plunder. And then I had always kept on very good terms with the Undi, when they passed on their way to Cape Town with their guns and ivory and what not. I had even frequently fed them, and housed them over night in the quarters. All this reassured me, but, as I realized afterwards, I left out of my calculation Zulu hate and Zulu vengeance, which,

when they are once roused, are — well, they're worth an epic to commemorate them. They stop at nothing this side of "profoundest hell."

For the next week rumors and reports were thick and menacing. People found very little else to talk about. We heard of the mustering of angry tribesmen in the North, then of a regiment being sent from Cape Town with orders to deal severely with anything rebellious. And then the scare took hold of the country people and most of them moved into the protection of the city, while I remained stolidly where I was. But I have only a confused recollection of all that happened at that time. It is always hard to remember what happened before a great event, when one has lived through the event itself and is filled with the memory of it.

I never shall forget, however, as long as I live, that night of the 23d of January, which we afterwards learned was the day following the terrible tragedy of Isandhlwana. I was sitting in the veranda reading quietly when I heard the sound of footsteps in quick succession on the garden path. Some one was running hard. I looked up and saw a negro lad making his way towards the house at the very top of his speed. I never saw a face so convulsed with fear. His eyes were literally standing out of their sockets and his mouth was wide open. He reached my side in a moment, but he could not utter a single word for terror. He could only gasp and work his face in agony, and point furiously in the direction from which he had come. I knew he must have meant the approach of Zulus, but my first impulse was to take the news calmly. It was so easy to frighten a boy and there could really be very little to fear.

As I stood there some one stepped up and drew the trembling, paralyzed lad into the house, and at that moment I heard a new sound — a dull, penetrating sound. It was the heavy, rhythmical tramp of feet. And following up the origin of the sound with my eyes I saw, just at the turn of the road where it came into view of the house, the gleam of bright head feathers and then a line of swarthy faces looking over the tops of great oblong yellow shields. They were Undi, and that loping trot would bring them close up in a minute or two. Still I did not feel any fear; there

was no reason. Even when they entered my gate and marched down the length of my garden in a broad column ten-abreast (there were not more than twenty or twenty-five in their party) and tramped rather ruthlessly on my flower-beds, — even then my only thought was impatience to reprimand these clowns spoiling my flowers with stupid marching tactics. I leaped to my feet and shouted in bad Zulu, but as emphatically as I could, that they should "mind where they marched," and be more careful of my property if they wanted any favor of me. Just then one of my negroes ran in front of the column and shouted something at them, waving his arms as if to wave them back. As he stood there in the path of the advancing line, one of the Zulus, a tremendous fellow, stepped forward, in advance of the rank, and like a flash, he struck my servant a blow with his assegai just between the shoulder and the breast. It was a fearful downward stroke, enough to rip the body open to the waist. Down went the poor man like a log and the column passed over him without a sound. And now along that dark line of faces my eye seemed to see at last the hateful gleam of murder.

I was not dazed; I was not sickened. For the moment a frenzy seized me; all the dormant activity in my nature was roused into maddened life. I rushed to the corner behind the door where I kept my heavy martini rifle loaded and ready for "big game." I caught up the gun and fired into the middle of the brown column, now close upon the house. I could see at once the hole punched in one of the yellow shields (a martini bullet makes nothing of ox-hide) and the shield was lowered and there was the red wound in the throat of the fiend behind the shield, who came on a few paces and then dropped down, first on his knees and then flat forward on his face, while the blood gushed out of his mouth at every gasp. The big fellow who stood next to him — perhaps his brother — reached the top step of the veranda at two bounds. I clubbed my rifle and struck at him savagely — my blood on fire with frenzy — and he, with ease, it seemed to me, swept back the piece in my face with his heavy shield and beat me to the floor like a nine-pin, my head striking hard against the base of the door post.

I was stunned, but not senseless, and I held my breath to feel

the brute bending over me and tearing out my very heart with a stab of his assegai; when suddenly, out from the open door, a form flashed by me. It was more like the nervous spring of a hound than the bound of a man; and the next instant I saw two withered hands close over the great, corded neck of the dusky giant above me. And he — he was six feet ten if he was an inch — he went back as if a thunder-bolt had struck him full in the face. Crash! he came down on the broad of his back — the whole porch trembled with the shock; and when I saw his face, over the shoulder of his assailant, it was purple, and the tongue was protruding its full length; and I saw the assegai fall from his right hand as the hand opened and the fingers stiffened like chilled wax.

Now I was dazed; I scarcely knew whether I saw or felt. But those black scoundrels behind were on hand at once. They swarmed up the steps and two of them, with one motion, buried their short spears in that form that had its hands fixed in the throat of their companion. I gave a loud groan of agony, as if it was I that had been stabbed, but I caught my breath the next instant. For I saw my Nathan — yes, it was he; I knew him at once by his long arms and the stoop of his body — I saw him whom I thought to be a poor, withered, decrepit old man, turn and seize the rifle that I had dropped and strike with it — oh, heavens! the lightning speed of that blow! — strike and spring full at the crowd of dusky giants with his dreadful club. Then all was whirling and half confusion, but I saw Nathan strike, as it seemed, everywhere at once. I never would have believed that such strength and speed were ever given to a mortal arm. I saw one man throw up his shield and saw it beaten down — the iron arm of a Zulu beaten down like a child's — and his brains dashed out as if his skull were made of paper. Then all was a whirl once more, but I remember counting five distinct shocks of men falling, which made the floor shake under me.

Then I saw what few men in the world have ever seen. I saw a band of Zulus retreating from battle, skulking away with terror written on their faces — many of them spattered with blood. They kept their faces turned towards the house as if they did not dare to turn their backs on that single enemy. While there on the top step of the porch, with the rifle now twisted out of all shape,

grasped by the barrel in the right hand, stood Nathan. His back was turned to me; he was quivering from head to foot, as if with the violence of the passion that had taken hold of him, — and out of the depths of him somewhere came a sound, a most peculiar sound which I can only liken to a kind of deep, snarling growl.

And it was then at that moment — so help me, heaven — as I lay there stunned and wounded, that my whole being once more was fired with disgust and loathing for that poor black servant. There may have been some fear mingled with it now, as he stood there in his strange might; but it was mostly fierce, loathing hate. I am absolutely certain that if I had had my revolver in my belt, and energy and strength to draw it, I would have shot him in the back where he stood. Witness it! And yet his own blood that he had shed for me was still warm on the ground. I remember how the mad wish almost found expression in words — that the Zulus would turn back and overpower him and tear him to pieces before my eyes.

But I saw there was little chance of this as I looked beyond to the retreating remnant of my enemies. They were still backing away silently, as if they could not even bear the eye of this dreadful being who stood unmoved glaring at them. Farther and farther they went. They had passed out of the garden gate and reached the road beyond. Then I saw no more, for a torpor, whether from exhaustion or mere reaction, settled heavily upon me, and my sense left me.

When I opened my eyes again I became lazily conscious that I had not stirred from the place where I had fallen. I could look down the length of the garden. There was not a sign of a Zulu now, — though lying stark and ghastly about the steps of the veranda were a number of huge forms with marks of fearful wounds upon them. And there, on the top step of the porch, I saw a form that I knew well. It was Nathan's form. He was no longer standing erect, as when I saw him last, facing the cowering band of Zulus; he was lying on one side, not flat, but half supported by his arm. His eyes were only half closed, but as I looked they seemed to be closing still more, as though the same languor that held me were laying hold on him; and beneath him and around him I could see a great pool of dark-colored blood. The realization

of things seemed to come home to me, and yet I felt strangely indifferent. I realized that Nathan was badly wounded, that he was bleeding to death; and yet I felt no impulse to extend him aid. I am sure, of course, that the half-insensible state in which I lay took away my energy, and that I can lay much of the blame of my listlessness on that. But, but — well, let it pass !

I had not lain in this state for more than a moment, when, borne to my ears from the road, came once more the sound of the tramp of feet; but my ears could make out at once the difference from the Zulu tread. It had more ring and precision, and if one listened carefully he could catch the peculiar jingling made by a body of men marching with accoutrements.

I was about to cry out as loud as my wasted strength would let me, to notify the household that help was near, when my attention was attracted again to Nathan. He had heard the sound, for his eyes were open wide now and a strange gleam was in them which I had never seen before. I realized keenly the terrific effort that he made as he knelt upright; and then stooped and seized one end of the twisted and battered rifle near him and then, with another great effort, staggered to his feet and faced away from me toward the path that led in from the garden gate. As he stood there I noticed that strange quivering seize his entire body, and I heard for a moment, though much fainter now, that same deep, muttering growl. But it was only a moment that he stood there. He began almost at once to sway from side to side and I did not reach a hand to hold him; then his legs seemed to give way under him and he sank, rather than fell, down to the floor of the veranda and lay quite still. And I knew, even from where I was, from the awkward, rigid sprawl in which he lay, that life had gone out of him.

Redcoats now appeared at the garden gate, and the flash of the sunlight reached my eyes from bayonets and gun barrels. But it didn't affect me much. I had not even strength or energy to stand up and welcome them and thank them. I simply lay there half dozing, half awake; and soon I was conscious of the rumble of a multitude of heels on the porch around me. Two figures bent over me and half lifted me, and I could feel one passing his hands over me gently in examination. Then I heard a voice say, "You're

pretty badly used up, though it might easily be worse, — a nasty gash in the back of the head, and arm broken above the elbow and dislocated at the shoulder. But you've certainly left your mark on these copper devils. How, in the name of sense, you ever managed to mash so many of them single-handed is more than I can possibly guess." Then I heard him mutter something to some one, and a flask was pressed to my lips. I drank some of the liquor and while I was drinking I heard some one shout rather gruffly, "We can bury them all in one pit over by the fence." This roused me more than the brandy, but it seemed that it was not myself but my reason that took voice in me, and cried out, as I pointed to one body that I knew by its position, "He is to be buried alone, and mark the place." Then while the surgeon — he whose voice I had heard — was working over me, as he began at once to do, the thought came to me that perhaps I had not made myself clear, so I spoke out once more. "He saved my life," pointing to the body of my old servant.

It brought a vigorous "hush" from the surgeon; then he added that they would understand, and that my duty now was to keep quiet. He worked over me quickly and deftly, bandaged my head, lifted my shoulder back into place with a few twinges, and set the broken arm in splints. Then he called for two men with a stretcher and ordered me to be taken to my room. "He'll be on his feet in a day or two, if I'm not mistaken," were his last words. They carried me there gently, two of my blacks, including Sam, and put me to bed. With another dose of something warming I was soon fast asleep.

The next morning I felt almost as good as new — for what is a broken arm and a mere flesh-wound in the head to a healthy outdoor man? I was even well enough to make them dress me and prop me up on my lounge. But if my bodily state was righting and mending, my mental condition was a sadly disordered one. I never was besieged — cruelly besieged — by such a confused array of mental questions, each one clamorous and persecuting.

My position was such a difficult one to define to myself. Surely, from the events lately transpired, I should be a grateful man. But did I feel any gratitude? Was I then basely ungrateful? Of what precisely *had* I to accuse myself? What had I

done? What should I do? What should I feel? Had I been in a reliably sane state of mind for the last six weeks and suffering from no chronic hallucination of any kind? And then, out of all the questions, as if resolved out of them all uniting them like a great climax chorus, came the question: — What, in the name of all mystery, was the solution of that problem which that poor black fright carried about with him and which lay with him in the grave, but still unsolved? Then came the realization — however I might grind my teeth and resist it — that it was a relief, a soothing relief, to think that he was dead — dead and under the ground with four feet of heavy clay soil on top of him.

The last voice, however, in my reflections was that of memory which calmly reminded me that he had saved my life. This was a simple fact. I spoke to Sam on the first opportunity and asked him whether the soldiers had obeyed my directions and marked the place where they had buried Nathan. He said that they had, and had made it very plain with a piece of whitened board. I then told him that I was going to make it much plainer with a slab of white stone — marble, if I could — to be set up at the head of the mound; and I gave him orders at once to see about having the stone procured in town by the next two men who went in with the ox-cart. What else, in reason, could I do?

Two days after that the stone arrived, and I was sufficiently well to walk down and watch them set it up. The little yellow mound was in sight of my bedroom window. As I passed out my door, Sam met me and held out a letter to me. I knew the writing at a glance. It was Sir Arthur Meredith's. And it startled me, too, and made my hand shake a little with eagerness, for I remembered that my last letter had been to ask him for information about Nathan — mysterious Nathan — who was now lying over there under the clay mound.

But what was it that made me, as my eye glanced over the written page, start as if some one had struck me, and cry aloud — so loud that the whole house must have heard me, and stamp furiously on the ground, in spite of the twinge it gave my shoulder, and then walk quickly up and down as an outlet for my excitement; then catch up the letter which I had dropped, and read it again as if I could not make sure that my eyes read aright? Never,

never shall I forget the shock of that letter — never did a few lines of news so literally nearly take a man off his feet! I could scarcely stand. I did not feel at all sure whether I was standing or lying down, awake or dreaming.

But here is the letter. I give it in full. It is very short and does not need synopsizing :

> My Dear Sherwood :
>
> Your letter reached me on the 15th. It is by the merest chance that it caught me in civilization so that I am able to send you back an answer that will reach you promptly. I could not help smiling when I read the inquiry which makes up the body of your letter. So you really have not found out my secret, but have lived so long deceived? You ask about the connections, etc., of Nathan, who has evidently, in spite of bad looks, won a way into your particular favor. Did you not know that for eight weeks you have been housing and employing not a man but a Simian — nothing more nor less than a specimen of anthropoid (Trogiodytus Gorilla) — indeed, one of the most remarkable ones I ever happened upon? It is rather a bold joke for a naturalist to play,— but you have been uncommonly gullible. You will ask me a number of questions about the execution of the whole affair in detail and they will be more easily answered than explained. I can only say that, in addition to his unusually human appearance, for an ape, Nathan added a high degree of tractability, and this, together with a large expenditure of patience and some skill on my part, accounts for it all. I had to use some rather cruel measures, such as the administration of the searing iron, to remove tell-tale hair. Then Nathan had to be fitted with a skin-tight wig, to give the impression of a crop of approved Ethiopian wool. But it was all comparatively easy. The only real labor, which I made a pastime of, was the training, which took me about two years and a half; and you see what fruit it has borne. This is all. Excuse my deep-laid, practical joke, which you now can enjoy with me. You will find some use, I am sure, in that big country of yours, for poor, old, fallen Nathan, even if it be but to keep him for a curiosity. Goodbye to you. We leave here tomorrow for the Upper Nile. I am always, etc.,
>
> Arthur Meredith.

This was Meredith's letter. After I had read it over the third time I grew more calm and sank into a large arm-chair, and began to think of all manner of things. The thoughts crowded very thick, one after the other, so that I could hardly get a sight of one at a time.

I heard the noise of voices outside, and I remembered that some of my fellows were at work putting up the stone. This brought me to myself and I realized, in a half-determined sort of way, that I should go out and put a stop to their work and make them carry the slab away. I even rose with this thought in my

mind, and walked to the door. They could easily hear me if I called from the threshold. But as I stood there, with the orders just on my lips, a scene of a few days before came back to me.

I see right before me, on the top step of the porch, an old, withered form lying in a broad pool of blood, and scattered close about are the huge bodies of my would-be murderers. And then, at the sound of feet in the distance, which marked, as he thought, the approach of more of my enemies, I see that form drag itself to its feet, grasp a battered gun-barrel and, in the very act and effort of placing himself between me and the coming danger, fall down dead before my eyes.

I turned and walked back into the house. "They can leave the stone where it is," I muttered, "I will never stir it."

And I never have stirred it. Sometimes (quite often, indeed), I walk down and read the inscription on it. The inscription is this :

Here lies
NATHAN
Who died to save his Master

Surely there is no harm in that, and I have not done wrong in leaving it there.

The Mystery of Sally.*

BY CHARLES SLOAN REID.

SALLY was a hired girl, the seventeenth since the baby came, about thirteen months before. But we realized that at last we had found a treasure. Sally was inventive. The kaleidoscopic repertoire of amusement which she furnished for our tootsy-wootsy was something to command the admiration of the most callous-brained pessimist of the never-smiles.

This aggregation of inventive genius had been purchased at a weekly instalment of four dollars. Cheerfully, we should have made it five on demand, within a week after her arrival.

But Sally seemed to be devoid of the graft contamination and, indeed, she spent her money like a lord, more than half of her weekly pay going for gimcracks of one kind or another for the amusement of our little one. A car ride to the park each day for the pleasure of our baby formed one of her personal extravagances. Baby soon became so much attached to her that "Mama" was no longer interesting, except at certain periods during the day, and these periods Sally managed so cleverly that no disturbance came to the household serenity through baby's impatient demands.

One thing soon became apparent. Sally had the going habit. She wanted to be away from the house more than half of the time, but, as our little one always came back from these little excursions in excellent spirits, and, barring the harrassing fears that Baby might contract some of the many contagious or infectious diseases of childhood — such as measles, chicken-pox, whooping-cough or some other horrifying thing — this habit of Sally's was not at all inconvenient to the household.

Another thing which recommended Sally was the habitual

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neatness of her person, and what became an interesting mystery to us was the matter of how she could spend from two to three dollars per week solely and unselfishly for the amusement of our little one, and dress herself with such taste on the remainder.

Finally, we decided that Sally must be getting credit somewhere, and that we should raise her wages, in order that she might be enabled to meet her obligations.

But about this time I saw Sally emerging from a bank one day. I had been some distance away and unobserved by her.

"Ah," I exclaimed under my breath, "she is borrowing of the bank."

The cashier of this bank was a particular friend of mine, and I determined to learn something of Sally's financial operations. This I had no trouble in doing, and soon learned to my amazement that Sally was not a borrower, but a depositor, to the extent of forty or fifty dollars a week.

My wife and I held a consultation over the matter, for the mystery had deepened. Why one who could indulge the daily extravagances of Sally, and yet deposit forty dollars per week, should hire herself out at a wage of four dollars per week was amazingly mysterious — and yet, Sally was not a thief. Not the smallest item of anything of value had been missed from the house, and no coins or bills ever were kept about the place.

So the mystery of Sally deepened. But, notwithstanding this, Sally was by incalculable odds the best nurse we ever had possessed, or ever could hope to have, and we determined that nothing should dispossess us of her services — no, not if it became necessary to raise her wages to ten dollars per week, which extravagance I could of course ill afford.

So Sally remained, keeping up her usual program, only inventing new means of amusement each day. How long we should have kept her I do not know. But accident plays a large part in the movement of human affairs, and it was an accident which led to the separation of our Sally from us.

An employee from our mills had been seriously crushed in a dray collision over on the East Side, and I had gone over to investigate the responsibility for the accident. This matter being soon concluded, I was returning to the office, when I met

Jenkins, a friend of mine. Jenkins likes a faker, or a side show performance better than anything; and the East Side was noted for its attraction for fakers and showmen of one kind or another.

"Hello, old man!" called Jenkins from across the street, "wait a moment."

I waited, and Jenkins came over.

"Do you know," he began, "I have found one of the smoothest artists in the show line down here that I've seen in a long while."

"What's his class?" I asked.

"Wild animal tamer, and he has been playing to crowded houses here for the past six weeks. You want to see this, especially the afternoon performance, at which time he gives an extraordinary feature."

He was leading, and we soon came to the entrance way of a large tent which occupied a portion of the area usually taken up by the showmen. Outside were a number of big posters announcing, both by word and illustration, the wonderful feats performed by the man inside, among them being one which was especially horrifying — this being announced in big letters as the special afternoon feature. Jenkins had secured tickets and was hurrying me inside.

Our seats proved to be in a good position, and we had not long to wait for the beginning of the show. The performer soon appeared in the caged arena, and the various features of the program soon were passing before us. Tigers, leopards and lions, one after another, had been introduced, and at last King Leo, a tremendous lion, stood beside his master in the arena.

"Now we get the star performance," whispered Jenkins.

The showman advanced to the front of the cage, where he opened a small wicket window.

"Now," he began, "if some mother in the audience will bring me her baby for a few moments, I will show you that Leo will hold the little one in his great mouth as tenderly as its mother can hold it in her arms. Trust me, some mother — your little one shall receive no harm whatever."

"We have only to wait a moment," declared Jenkins. "There is a young woman in the audience who furnishes the baby each

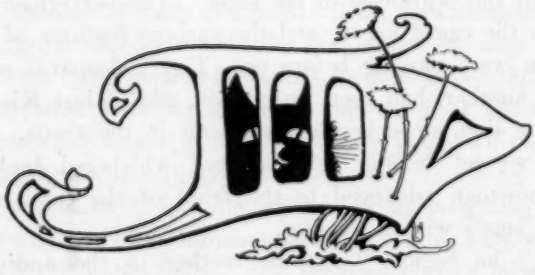
afternoon; and Torrelli, the showman, pays her ten dollars on the side after each performance."

"Horrors!" I exclaimed.

And just at this moment the young woman arose from somewhere near the front and advanced, with the baby in her arms. I got one glimpse of them — and the next instant I was on my feet, though almost transfixed in my indignation. The woman was our Sally — *and the baby was our boy.*

I summoned strength enough to draw my revolver, and the man who was not afraid of the whole African jungle cowered before my aim. In the meantime I somehow reached the side of Sally and seized the boy in my arms, allowing Sally to make a precipitate exit.

No doubt she is now working her scheme in some other city where Torrelli is showing. And we — well, we are not requiring the services of a nurse any more. Also, we are seriously thinking of calling our boy Daniel, the little one having been delivered from the lion's mouth, you know.



An Idyll of Cape de Castro.*

BY LEROY WALLINGFORD.

T was Tong Sue who first discovered gold at Cape De Castro. Tong was prowling up the coast towards Port Darwin, and the strip of white sand that ran like a lace insertion between the emerald waters and the stunted mangroves attracted him. Tong went ashore, washed a few buckets of the sand and then pulled his boat up on the beach. The find was exceptionally rich.

It is a peculiar fact that a discovery of gold, no matter how jealously the discoverer guards the secret, is carried in some unexplainable way to men miles away from the find. This has been proved a thousand times. It would seem that the very intensity with which the man on the spot prays that all others will keep away, has an effect that is diametrically opposite. Men suddenly feel a desire to take the trail that leads to the new Golconda, although that trail may have appeared hopeless only a few days previous, and they explain their arrival at the field by saying that "something" dragged them in that direction.

This mysterious "something" disturbed Tong Sue's solitude five days after he landed at Cape De Castro. A Japanese and a white man arrived from different points of the sunburned plain, and they made straight for the beach and pegged out claims. The Chinaman didn't speak. The old maxim which tells us that silence is golden was translated from the Chinese.

Next day another Jap drifted in from the gray northwest, and the following day brought another. Tong viewed the newcomers with impassive eyes, but he gave no welcomes. He washed industriously from early morn till the tropical twilight was smothered in the heavy night, and the little bag that hung round his neck grew heavier as the days passed.

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Tong's silence welded the friendship that immediately sprang up between the four newcomers. They hated Tong and they liked each other through knowing of the common hate. They compared notes, talked and smoked together in the evenings and cursed the Chinaman every little while. But the hostile looks and the curses did not affect Tong. He dreamed rosy dreams of a maiden who lived far to the north in evil-smelling Hankow, and he twirled his dish merrily.

It was unlucky for the Chinaman that the new arrivals were not as fortunate as himself. His days had been exceptionally profitable, but he soon realized that his claim was the exception. He didn't question his neighbors regarding their luck; he discovered it by that peculiar power of intuition possessed by men who rely upon their eyes to collect information that is never whispered loud enough for their ears to hear.

On the fifth night after the arrival of the first strangers Tong was made still further cognizant of the envy of the four. His sleep was disturbed by a slight sound, and by amazing quickness he managed to twist his body in time to avoid the knife thrust. The incident disturbed him. The few hours that intervened between the happening and daylight he devoted to concentrated thought and the bandaging of an arm that had been slightly wounded when he attempted to hold the would-be assassin. It looked as if the quartet intended to make Cape De Castro too warm for the original pioneer.

Tong had no wish to evacuate hurriedly. He was an aggressive person if judged by Celestial standards, and each day's labor was making the little bag heavier. By daylight he had made up his mind to match his cunning against their strength.

That evening he crept into the bush towards a buffalo wallow a mile inland, and there performed the unpleasant work of bagging a portion of the carcass of a bull buffalo that had become bogged in the sticky mud some three weeks previous. The task was not agreeable, but Tong worked with much determination. The vision of the maiden in Hankow came up before his eyes and made him forget much. He dragged his load by a circuitous track to his boat that he had secreted in the mangroves, and then paddled out into the little bay that sheltered behind the long

snaky strip of land that pointed up toward Sumatra. He anchored the boat by means of a heavy stone and a few fathoms of rope, and then, by the aid of a long pole, he suspended the bag containing the portion of the dead buffalo from the stern so that it hung some feet above the water. Quite satisfied with his work, he lit his pipe and made a comfortable couch for himself in the bottom of the boat.

The four on shore missed Tong early that evening. One of their number had wasted a considerable amount of time and patience in crawling silently to the spot where the Chinaman usually slept, and was much disgusted at finding that Tong Sue had changed quarters. His companions were also disgusted when he made his report. They made an extensive search of the beach, and towards midnight the moon, that peeped for an instant from behind the black clouds, enabled them to locate the boat in the middle of the little bay.

The four felt aggrieved. They looked upon the Chinaman's action as a personal insult. He had insinuated by his action that their company was not desirable, and they acted quickly to avenge the indignity. They drew lots between themselves, and five minutes afterwards two of the Japs placed their knives between their teeth, stepped out of their scanty clothing and waded into the warm water of the bay. The white man and the other Jap sat themselves down on the sand and waited.

An hour passed and the two who had swam out to expostulate with Tong had not returned. Three hours went by, yet no sounds came from the water. At last the white man, cursing softly, moved up the beach. The Jap followed slowly. It was plain to both that the gods had not been kind to the two swimmers.

Tong Sue did not come ashore next morning. He had examined the beach very early, and seeing only two of his visitors moving about he thought it advisable to stay on the water and rest. The Jap and the white man also rested. They sat on the beach and watched the little boat, punctuating long silences with strange curses. They wondered how Tong had disposed of their two friends. There were no firearms at Cape De Castro, and one has to be quick with a knife to deal with two visitors who make a surprise call. Sometimes the two on the beach

wondered what was in the bag that Tong Sue had suspended from the stern of his boat.

"He will be sleepy to-night," remarked the white man, as the sun dipped towards the mangrove trees.

The Jap nodded and sharpened his knife on a smooth pebble.

"We'll get him sure," continued the white, and the other bared his yellow teeth in a smile of approval.

"Gettem good," he snapped. "They two dam fools last night. Never mind, mucha more for us." He thought of the Chinaman's gold and stroked his knife cunningly.

They relapsed into silence, sitting side by side till the thick night swept down from Asia and blotted out the little boat.

Tong Sue overslept himself the following morning. The sun was shining upon a deserted beach when he looked shorewards. He searched the shoreline patiently, but no one was visible. Then he glanced cunningly at the suspended bag of offal and the blue water beneath.

"Gettem all four!" he laughed softly. "Plentee good smell, plentee good shark. Dam fool not know!"

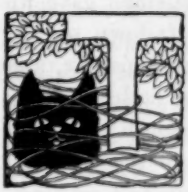
He tripped lightly to the stern and started to unfasten the rope that bound the end of the pole to the seat. Tong Sue's thoughts were far away at that moment. The little maiden at Hankow came up before his eyes, and he fingered the rope with clumsy fingers.

But it was a bad moment for day dreams. As Tong stepped across the pole, the untied end was suddenly jerked up by the weight hanging upon the other extremity, and the Celestial was thrown into the water.

A big "gray nurse" shark that had shepherded the buffalo meat for the preceding thirty-six hours, snapped the bag before it touched the surface of the water. Her traveling companion, a medium-sized "bull nose," attended to Tong Sue, and peace settled down upon the white beach of Cape De Castro.

A Game of Conversation.*

BY HAROLD KINSABBY.



HE road ran dusty, yellow and business-like to northwards, holding its way to the distant town of Hadley with as steady a singleness of purpose as if it felt itself responsible for the most important and multitudinous traffic. Neither two-legged nor four-legged creature, nor anything on wheels, disturbed its dust as far as the eye could follow it, but though left to itself it retained its consciousness of rectitude, and swerved not a jot from its uncompromising directness toward Hadley. Southward, indeed, it turned itself sharply around a corner and went off to the east, as if it had pressing affairs to look after in that direction.

Yet there were people — and this very thoroughfare knew it to its scorn and shame — who could see just such a yellow guide to energetic morality stretching ahead, ready and anxious to direct their footsteps, and yet could turn off into fields, or stop and lounge in shades!

Inspired by mute indignation against such worthlessness, the Maul road to Hadley puffed up a sudden small whirlwind of protesting dust in the very face of one of this shameless tribe, without, however, seeming to abash this particular idler. He was not prepossessing in costume. His clothes were the dusty, rusty, yellow brand that is the uniform of the brethren of the road, his hat of unseasonable felt was of a rustier black, and his shoes had long since been divorced from polish. But his care-free contentment had nothing faded about it nor travel-worn. Nothing seemed to be calling him from ahead nor driving him from behind, and he sauntered along as if being alive were the only thing of the least importance, and being idle were no offense to his conscience. Any right-minded and busy passer-by from Hadley would have called

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him a tramp, and very properly refused him a dinner, unless he worked for it first. But his face wore an expression of untroubled serenity, as if he had a happy confidence that there would be things to eat when the time came to think of eating.

So as the sun was hot and the road dusty, and as there was no reason on earth why he shouldn't, this rusty gentleman gave up even his unenergetic strolling, and threw himself down on the grassy roadside, in the skimpy shade of a Lombardy poplar, and lay there, quite comfortable and happy, thinking of nothing at all.

Presently, from round the sharp turn to the south came the sound of a horse's feet, trotting leisurely, and as the roadside loiterer turned his eyes that way, a white horse, big and scrawny, trotted into sight, pulling a two-seated surrey, in which two ladies rode. One of them held the lines and flapped them at intervals over the horse's venerable white back and clucked at him, in the belief that she was making him go, while he jogged on at his own pace and allowed her to think so.

The lounger saw that the ladies were little and middle-aged, probably sisters, and noted the bundles that lay at the feet of the one in the back seat. His gaze lingered on the back of the surrey as it went up the road, and, returning, caught a little bundle in the dust, evidently just dropped. He wondered whether it would be worth while to pick it up and try to return it. Perceiving that they were not at all far away, and jogging easily, he decided that it would.

"Hey! Hey!" he called after them, and ran down the road, the parcel in his hand. "Hello!" he called again, when just behind them, "you've lost something!"

The white horse stopped and two enquiring faces framed in gray curls looked round the side of the surrey.

"Isn't this yours?" enquired the man. "I guess you dropped it out."

"Why, yes," said the lady in the front seat, "so it is! Thank you very much."

"Thank you," said the lady in the back seat. "I don't know what we should have done without it."

"Good afternoon, sir," said both ladies, and the one in front clucked and slapped the lines. The white horse took it that she

wanted to go again, and regretfully moved one hoof and then the rest out of the repose into which he had slackened.

"Sister Julia," said the lady behind, "It was really very kind of him, and he had to run to catch up. Don't you think we might ask him if he's going our way?"

The one in front reflected a moment. "He looked a good deal like a tramp, Eunice," she said, "but I don't know what harm there'd be, even then."

"Maybe he's just looking for work," was the reply. "I'm sure he hasn't a bad face, and he took off his hat when he handed the parcel to me."

A pull at the lines brought the white horse to another willing stop. Again the two heads looked round the side of the surrey. The man had not gone back to his roadside shade, but, once on his feet, had decided that he might as well stay there, and was sauntering along toward Hadley. Seeing that the ladies had stopped again, and evidently wanted to speak to him, he hurried up.

"Are you going towards Hadley?" asked Miss Julia.

"Yes'm," said the man.

"Wouldn't you like to ride?"

"Why, yes, thank you, ma'am, I would."

Miss Julia made room for him on the front seat beside her, and again the white horse waked and commenced his jog.

For a little way the three rode on in silence, the ladies a trifle embarrassed, and not knowing whether they should converse; he looking about him with the same expression of care-free pleasure in the world that he had worn when tramping, and sitting beside Miss Julia with easy self-possession.

The dust was thick and the white nag's tread was far from dainty. A cloud of dust hung round the vehicle, and now and then the horse blew as if to blow his nostrils free from it, and once he gave a cough, turning his head around toward the vehicle and snapping, as if at a fly. Just then the silence was broken.

"The dust's awful bad to-day!" said a voice.

It was a very queer voice, unnaturally husky, rather high-keyed. It was not Miss Julia's voice, and it wasn't at all like the voice in which the man had spoken. Miss Julia looked quickly around at him. His face was in its usual cheerful repose, and his eyes were

gazing off across the fields. Miss Julia turned farther, and looked at her sister. Miss Eunice was leaning out, scanning the road behind her.

"I thought," said she, "I heard somebody talking, but there's nobody in sight. Didn't you hear it?"

"Yes," said Miss Julia, "I thought it must have been you!"

"Perhaps there are some people over behind those trees," said Miss Eunice, settling back in her seat, "but it sounded so near."

Miss Julia glanced again at the man, and this time he turned his eyes to meet hers. They were very open, friendly, smiling eyes, and Miss Julia instinctively smiled back at them, and then she ventured a remark.

"You don't live in Hadley, do you?" she said.

"No," said the man; "at least, I never have. Maybe I'll stay awhile — it depends on how I find it."

"You want to find work, perhaps?" put in Miss Eunice.

"Yes," said the man, with a sudden smile of winning joyousness, "work; I'm out of work."

"Oh," said Miss Eunice. "Hadley's a nice place."

"Do you live there?" asked the man.

"No," replied Miss Julia for both, "not right in Hadley — our house is a mile and a half this side of there."

"Of course, Hadley isn't as big as Greensburgh," said Miss Eunice. "That's six miles from our house. Have you walked from Greensburgh? We might have brought you all the way, if we'd known."

"No'm," answered the man, "I didn't come through there."

They waited vainly to hear where he had come from. He resumed his study of the landscape, which was now nothing but level fields on both sides of the road. For several minutes there was nothing to disturb the silence but the regular pound of the horse's hoofs. He tossed his head once or twice, to jerk the lines through Miss Julia's hands to a looseness more to his liking, and as he did so the same strange, husky voice they had heard before spoke again:

"*I* think it's a mercy we didn't meet him sooner. Two's enough of a load to pull all the way from Greensburgh on a day like this, without bringing an extra man along."

Miss Julia looked at the man and then at her sister, astonishment and some alarm in her face.

"Eunice," she exclaimed, "who was that?"

"Of course, it's all right now, when we're near home and it's getting a little cooler. I'm willing to give a man a lift when I can."

"Eunice," again called Miss Julia, "is there a boy hanging on behind?"

"I can't see any, and I'm sure the voice came from somewhere in front."

"Greensburgh and back in one day's far enough, I say. It makes a fellow's hoofs weigh about a ton apiece time he gets back to his stable. And I think one of my shoes is loose, too. Feels like it."

At the first word of this, spoken still in the same astonishing voice, the sisters looked at each other. At the third, they looked at the man. With lips slightly parted in eager attention, but certainly not moving, with eyes wide and interested, he was gazing fixedly at the steadily jogging head of the old white horse. And thither the sisters' eyes turned too, slowly, incredulously, but irresistibly.

"It's — it's too preposterous!" murmured Miss Julia, after a full half-minute of silence. "Eunice," she said, "there *is* a boy hanging on behind."

"I'll get out and see ma'am," volunteered the man.

"Whoa!" called Miss Julia. Then she repeated, in peculiarly strained tones, "Whoa, Colonel Tobias!"

Colonel Tobias stopped obediently and settled at once into his favorite ungainly posture on three legs, resting one of the hind ones, while Fate and Miss Julia vouchsafed opportunity. The tramp jumped out, looked behind the surrey and all around it, and across the level fields.

"There isn't anybody that I can see anywhere," he reported.

The rest of the way — perhaps a mile — to the place where Colonel Tobias turned in familiarly at the driveway and stopped at the front porch of "the Gligg girls'" house, Miss Julia Gligg talked rapidly, unceasingly, and somewhat nervously, to the young man beside her, and Miss Eunice said nothing, but thought.

Miss Julia found that the man's name was Joseph Andrews, and he found that she and her sister lived alone and were very comfortably fixed. He also found that at present there was nobody to take care of Colonel Tobias, except a neighbor's boy, who did it very badly, and the ladies had to do the harnessing themselves. Thereupon Miss Julia discovered, for the man allowed it to escape him casually, that he was a master hand with horses. Accordingly it happened, by the time they reached the house, that it was agreed that he might as well stay that night — and maybe a few days — till he could find work in Hadley, and sleep in their barn, and take care of Colonel Tobias, in return for his board and lodging. All this made brisk conversation, clear to the gate, but, here and there in its brief intervals, little remarks in that incomprehensible husky voice came floating back to Miss Julia and Miss Eunice, always singularly apropos and increasingly equine. The two ladies paid no further attention, in words, and the young man made no comment. Miss Julia only talked the faster and Miss Eunice grew a little more abstracted. At last they gave the reins over into the hands of Joseph Andrews and alighted in a state of absolute bewilderment.

"Sister Julia," began Miss Eunice, late that evening, for the first time approaching the subject, "you don't think it's possible, do you, that it — that it was — that it *could* have been Colonel Tobias?"

"I haven't the least idea *what* to think!" returned Miss Julia. And the two ladies retired in equal and helpless perplexity.

Meanwhile Joseph Andrews, out in the barn with Colonel Tobias, spent the evening in radiant satisfaction, partly because of his supper, and partly because of his lodging, and partly because of the easy place he had fallen into, with a prospect of nothing in particular to do and plenty to eat, indefinitely, but most of all on account of falling in with a talking horse. And even in the night he wakened once or twice and chuckled at the accomplishment of his new acquaintance, and for a few moments before he went to sleep again, looked with immovable face at distant corners of the barn, from which the equine voice proceeded in turn.

The morning was still very fresh and young and Joseph had scarcely rubbed the sleep out of his eyes when Miss Julia appeared

in the doorway and came out to the barn to talk with her lodger. She talked of the weather, and of Hadley, and of Joseph himself, and finally, leading carefully up to it, to make it very plain that it was not at all what she had come for, of Colonel Tobias.

"Joseph," said she, "have you noticed anything — peculiar — about Colonel Tobias this morning?"

"No'm, I don't know as I have. Not anything different from last night, anyway!"

"In the night, do you mean?"

"Yes'm. He seemed to be talking a good deal in his sleep, same as he talked in the afternoon, you know. Has he always done it, ma'am? How did you get him taught — he seems to speak so natural and easy!"

"Why, Joseph!" said Miss Julia, "do you really think it was Colonel Tobias talking yesterday? Horses can't talk — it's ridiculous!"

The face that Miss Julia turned upon her lodger was full of appealing astonishment, and his expression was a perfect reflection of her own as he stammered:

"Why! Did you never hear him do it before?"

"*Do* you think he did it?" implored Miss Julia.

Joseph took off his hat, twisted it in his hands, and gazed into it as if he might read the solution there. His guileless features put on a look of perplexed pondering.

"I — I never would have believed it, if I hadn't heard it with my own ears and seen it with my own eyes," he said at length. "My own brother might have told me, and I wouldn't have believed it. If it had been only the afternoon, I *might* have thought there was some mistake about it, though there wasn't another person but just us three in sight — and him. But all those things he said last night, in the same voice — you couldn't mistake that voice! And then this morning again, almost the first thing when I waked up, I heard a sort of muttering, something about 'I wish they'd hurry up with that mash.' Why, ma'am, if *he* didn't do it, *I* must have! I'm certain I heard it, and I'm sure there hasn't been any one else around."

Miss Julia's eyes went to the open barn door, the stall, and the white back of Colonel Tobias. His ragged white tail swished off

a fly. Then he turned his long head and gazed inquiringly at the two in the doorway.

"Do you suppose he heard us?" asked Miss Julia, in an awed, involuntarily subdued voice. Then she blushed and gave a nervous laugh. "It's ridiculous," she exclaimed, backing away from the stable door.

Ten minutes later she went back to her sister.

"Well," she said, "he's perfectly sure it *was* Colonel Tobias. He heard him again in the night, and this morning early. His uncle knew a man that heard one once. He thinks it isn't any stranger than that parrots should, and we all know they do. And then horses are so intelligent; they have a great deal more sense than parrots!"

"But I never would have thought it of Colonel Tobias," exclaimed Miss Eunice.

"Neither would I," her sister admitted.

"Well, do you now?" asked Miss Eunice.

Skepticism was struggling with demonstration in Miss Julia's mind, and her answer did not come directly. She gazed absently out of the window, in Miss Eunice's own fashion, thinking how to reply. Joseph came out of the barn, leading the white horse. Miss Julia had directed that he should be brought up to nibble a while at the grass in the yard. Just a little past the window he stopped.

"I guess this is as good a place as any!"

Miss Julia started and Miss Eunice jumped up from her chair and ran to look out too. It was the voice of yesterday — there was no mistaking it — and there was Colonel Tobias, beginning to eat eagerly, and there stood Joseph Andrews beside him, holding the halter and smiling up at the two ladies. When he turned his head away Miss Julia exclaimed, forgetting to lower her voice, as she had meant:

"I tell you what we'll do! We'll drive over to Hadley this very afternoon, and get Cousin Cephas Qualey, and take him out for a ride, and see what he thinks of it."

The morning wore away, but not uneventfully. At intervals in the housework of the two ladies, when one or the other of them stepped out on the porch or was seen at the window, bits of talk

came to their ears. The white horse seemed to be talking at large — to nobody in particular. He never looked at them when he spoke. With the same elderly decorum that always marked his manner he went placidly about his grazing, lifting his head now and then, and moving on to a fresh spot. But at any moment he might be heard soliloquizing — in human language and a quavering voice — in a manner that no horse was ever known to display before. By noon his owners had had a revelation of his individuality — something they had never suspected him of possessing. They heard opinions of the weather, the barn, the neighborhood; views on driving and on hay; candid expressions concerning themselves and their ways, and some highly favorable comments on Mr. Joseph Andrews, till their minds were in a state of extraordinary turmoil.

Meanwhile, Joseph Andrews lay on the grass in the shade under the window and watched Colonel Tobias, and found his occupation extremely congenial. In the course of the forenoon Miss Eunice came out and learned more of his experiences during the night and of the man his uncle once knew, concerning whom he related a great many interesting particulars that he had neglected to mention to her sister.

He suggested, too, that such a phenomenon as the Colonel ought to be exhibited.

"Why, there's money in it," he said. "Any circus man would be glad to get him. You might begin with a private exhibition right here, and invite a few of the neighbors, just to start it. It would be a tremendous success. Just look at him now!"

Invited by the smooth green of the grass, Colonel Tobias had crooked his stiff knees and let himself down to roll. His venerable hoofs were just being lowered from their exuberant flourish in the air when Miss Eunice looked, and as he scrambled up again she heard the familiar husky voice declare:

"It's a great thing, this speaking your mind once in a while! It's a *great* thing, sure. I don't know why I've kept still so long. I'd just like to have old Cephas Qualey hear me once. He! He!"

Miss Eunice, upon hearing this frank avowal, was confirmed in her determination to keep from Joseph Andrews — and Colonel Tobias — their plan for the afternoon, and also decided to say

nothing to Julia about Joseph's suggestion until after they had seen Mr. Qualey, in whom both had great confidence.

Just before noon, a neighboring farmer, on his way from the village, threw a small packet of mail into the dooryard, and when, after dinner, Joseph had harnessed the Colonel into the surrey, Miss Eunice gave him the county paper for entertainment during their absence. As he handed Miss Julia the reins, Colonel Tobias threw up his head, without waiting for the customary cluck, and his husky equine voice was heard to exclaim:

"Now, old girls, we'll see what Cousin Cephe thinks of it!"

But that was the very last scrap of conversation in which the Colonel ever was known to indulge. On their return from their hot and unsatisfactory excursion, the Gligg girls waited vainly for Joseph Andrews to come and hold the horse, and then they searched vainly for him in the stable. But on the porch, pinned to the *Greensburgh Chronicle*, they found this pencil note, written very correctly, in a neat hand:

DEAR LADIES:

The newspaper which you kindly lent me for an afternoon's amusement seems to point the way to another chapter in my somewhat erratic career. From it I learn that Ridgely Brothers' Triple Universal Show, with which I was connected last season, as Prof. Andrée the Swedish Ventriloquial Wonder, will arrive in Greensburgh late this afternoon. I can walk there easily before supper time, without troubling Colonel Tobias for another "lift," as I feel that his complaint was just. The Colonel has inspired me with a great idea. I am convinced that the dapple-gray on which Mlle. Desirée does the blazing hoop act can be induced to prattle as fluently as your own fiery steed, and if you will inquire at the ticket van for two "complimentaries" left by Prof. Andrée for the Misses Gligg, when the circus shows at Hadley, day after to-morrow, I shall be much pleased to have you judge for yourselves.

Meanwhile, with sincere thanks for your kind confidence in such a tough-looking stranger, I am very truly yours,

JOSEPH ANDREWS.

But the disappointed proprietors of an ordinary dumb animal felt too much chagrin to avail themselves of such an opportunity, and so they never again heard a talking horse.

Cupid Valiant.*

BY SWIFT ADAMS.

IF you happen to be traveling in certain parts of Montana, you will probably put up at one of those little edifices that are two-thirds saloon and the rest hotel. There are usually two in town, and if you stop at one you wish you had stopped at the other. If you have a genial disposition, after supper you will sit around and smoke in the large room that serves as lobby, bar-room and office, besides containing the appurtenances for billiards, cards and such other games as are popular on that section of the map.

When the room becomes hot and smoke-filled beyond toleration you and others go outside and lounge on the stoop, or on the exceedingly hard ground, and very likely you swap stories.

Seven or eight of us had reached that point in trying to forget an everlastingly hot night. Cowhands, farmers, and some hard to classify, straggled out of the bar-room of the maliciously named Hotel Comfort, and listened to the highly flavored tales, and contributed their own of the same quality.

I, being a stranger, was a little timid about breaking into the talk, but during a lull I hazarded a remark:

"I don't want to be curious about things I shouldn't," I said, "but I saw a dignified old man inside playing solitaire, and he had a bullet hole in his left ear. I have been wondering ever since how he got it."

There was a general laugh, and a drawling, high-pitched voice spoke:

"You're a stranger here, ain't you?"

"My first trip in this piece of country," I replied.

"That old man is Jedge Buck," said the voice. "Most of us know how he got that there dent in his ear. But as there ain't

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been a new story sprung here in over two years, I guess the boys can stand for me telling you about it."

Nobody objected, probably because of lack of energy, and the drawler lighted another cigarette. The flare of the match showed a tanned, lined face and keen eyes.

"A dare-devil gang used to stamp hereabouts," the speaker continued. "They were mostly fresh young ropers, one or two horse traders, a few no-account chaps — and me. We used to hunt trouble for the love of it. When we couldn't find any we manufactured it. There wasn't law or man we were afraid of.

"We had a leader called Red Mike. He had forgotten the word fear was in the language. He was strong, too, and lightning with his shooter. But all of us were those things about as much as Red Mike. It was his master mind that let him hold his job.

"When the rest of us were shooting up a saloon, or such trifle, and wishing for a bit of real hell, Red would work up doings juicy with excitement. He could smell opportunities, and you bet he always steered us into the hottest action.

"We generally used to cluster evenings in Yellow Grass Gulch, and ask Red if anything was doing likely to tear a hole in the calm. Sometimes Red had only middling good plans, such as turning loose the prisoners in the county jail, just for the fun of rounding 'em up.

"But one night he sprang a scheme that had even us swearing with admiration.

"'Brace up, boys' he said, 'there's going to be doings to-night. Old Jedge Buck sold 5,000 head of cattle to-day. He's got the cash locked up in his store at Brown's Corners. The old tightfist is sitting over the wad with a shotgun.

"'We're going to make him break a record and loosen up. We'll kindly provide him with a generosity. Our part is to grab the coin and then have a feast at Bud Hinkey's boozery!'

"That was a little stiff, even for us. We had shied away from the swiping game. But do you suppose we hesitated? We whooped and shouted that Red was a great man and ought to be President of the United States.

"It was moonlight, and as nice and cool as you could ask for, with not a mite of wind — a very devil of a night for making a

man feel he could wallop the universe with his hands tied. The horses felt it, too, and as we galloped along, singing and laughing, we sudden-like heard a noise.

"'Hands up!'

"Them words snapped out in a voice that brought us sitting up stiff. Every man of us raised his fists. A score of guns went up too and spit toward the sound.

"Then, by gum, into the moonlight, with a gun in each hand, rode Slim Johnson. Slim wasn't so much — but we all knew he could shoot the eyebrows off you with either hand, and didn't want no better fun than to try it.

"'Slim, you son of a gun,' Red Mike yelled, 'what do you think you're doing, holding us up this way? Holding *us* up! Of all the confounded nerve—'

"'You-all will turn around and go back the way you came,' Slim said, keeping his guns leveled.

"'Well, now, I guess not, Slim,' Red answered. 'We wouldn't let many people talk to us like that. Before anything worse happens, tell us what your game is.'

"'You'll never get us alive,' Slim said.

"'What?' Red asked.

"'I swear I'll drop the first man that touches her,' Slim answered, looking desperate.

"'What are you talking about, you cussed idiot,' Red Mike yelled.

"'Ain't you sent by Jedge Buck to bring back his daughter?' Slim asked — confused like.

"The boys bellowed with laughter and Slim went red as a lobster.

"'Lord, Slim!' Mike exclaimed, 'You don't tell me you've gone and stole Maria Buck?'

"'We're running away and we're going to be married in Spikeville to-morrow. You ain't said you're not after us, though,' Slim added, suspiciously.

"'Well, that *wasn't* exactly what we're figuring to do,' said Mike, when he could talk for laughing. 'You-all had better ride along with us.'

"Slim got the girl from where she was hid, and we moseyed

along the trail, Red Mike telling Johnson what we were up to. We wanted Slim to join us, but he said he couldn't do that. Pretty soon Slim and the girl fell a little behind and we could hear her telling him he ought to help her old man. But Slim knew us better than to try.

"In about half an hour we got to Brown's Corners. We hiked over to the store, and, by gum, there was the Jedge setting inside, with a big duck gun acrost his knees. When he saw us he knew we weren't there for no good. He had sand, though, and came out and said he'd plug the first man of us who came within sniffing distance of the mazuma.

"Whity Hanks (he could shoot the date off a dime) let go a forty-eight calibre pill that sent the gun flying out of the old man's hands. We yelled and started to rush inside, when Slim ran up the steps and turned around on us.

"I felt real pained, for I knew if Slim was going to try to stop us, he was likely to get awful unpopular.

"'Boys,' Slim said, 'you-all have got all night for this job. Lots of time. Now, Maria and I want to get married, and I want you to help me make the Jedge hitch us up.'

"The bunch saw the beauty of the situation and just howled with delight. When the Jedge saw his daughter he was plumb crazy. He said things, but we couldn't hear them for the whooping of the boys. He stood up there in the moonlight, red and excited and swearing, and we were about drunk with joy.

"Slim and Maria got off their horses. Slim waved his arms until he could make himself heard. Then he grabbed the girl and squared off to the Jedge. He explained that he and Maria was going to splice and it might as well be done right there.

"'I'll see you both shot first, you red-headed horse thief,' the Jedge shouted, his face all twisted up with mad.

"Now Slim was good-natured enough, but the Jedge was pricking him on a painful incident of his extreme youth. He yanked out a gun.

"'You'll marry us right now, or I'll put a bullet plumb through you,' he shouted.

"'You haven't the grit, you pony grabber!' yelled the Jedge.

"By gum, Slim let fly and bored His Honor in the left ear.

"'Now will you?' he bellowed, not hearing Maria, who was squalling.

"The Jedge was driveling, but he wasn't so mad he couldn't see Slim was in the deadest kind of earnest.

"'Stand up, confound you!' the Jedge cried, shaking his fists.

"'Slim Johnson, you no-good coyote, do you take that wilful hussy aside you to be your wife?'

"'Yes, you old heathen,' shouted Slim. 'And you-all keep your mouth shut of calling that girl names!'

"'Maria, you good-for-nothing vixen,' said the Jedge, getting madder all the time. 'are you going to take that murdering idiot, Slim Johnson, as your husband?'

"'I be,' Maria said.

"'I pronounce you man and wife — and disown you, drat you.' The Jedge was so full of angry he couldn't even swear. The boys cheered and whooped it up for Slim, but right in the middle of it, Slim shoved Maria inside the store and faced around beside the Jedge, with his guns drawn.

"'Now, boys,' he said, 'git.'

"For a minute we was stunned. Red Mike swelled up indignant, but before he could explode Slim cut in:

"'I'm thankful to you, boys, for how you've helped me. But the Jedge is my old man now, and before you get him you'll have to get me too.'

"I don't know what would have happened. But just for a minute we was undecided like. The Jedge was nobody's fool, and he saw that something had to be done mighty quick.

"'Boys,' he hollered, 'I reckon if you had my cash you would leave it over to Bud Hinkey's. So you-all go over to his place and spree on me for a week.'

"'He's loosened up, boys!' one of us yelled.

"That started 'em off, and the boys shouted and laughed and charged over to Hinkey's."

From a Papyrus.*

BY DONALD KENNICOTT.

AIL, Horus! Hail, Osiris! Hail, most bountiful Isis! But above these, my gods, must praise be given to the great mad god of the Jews, for I dwell singularly under the shadow of his favor. Therefore triumph swells my voice, and in my heart is joy and great wonder.

At dusk, on a day in the spring of the year of the nine plagues, my boat laden with black, writhing eels, with amethystine jelly-fish, and with striped sea-trout, taken alive cunningly for the refection of the fastidious, I passed up the river by the island owned of Hordedeef, the slave merchant. And there, sitting on the nethermost step of the barge-landing, I saw Anena first.

She leaned back against the green marble balustrade, she dipped her feet in the lapping water, and gazed out into the golden sunset, and as my boat passed by, she sang. The words of her song I could not hear, but none the less her song seemed to me sweet and gay and very sad. And her voice — ah, her voice was like the echo of bells at dusk, like the sobbing throat of the Nile at midnight, like the murmur of doves at noon. That night I did not sleep.

Next day I sold my boat, my nets, my coffer carved of lapis-lazuli, and the belt of jade work given me by my mother. I thought then that I had doubtless gone mad, for only the previous week a young hyena had run across my shadow, and as is well known, madness is often thus caused. Yet it was not so: I was guided of a god. With the moneys thus gained, I went to Hordedeef the slave-merchant. Ho, Hordedeef, Hordedeef, thou wast cunning as a serpent, subtle as a mother-cat,

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swift as the black hawk of Serapis! Yet this god was more cunning, more subtle and yet more swift. Ho! Hordedeef, friend Hordedeef, where is now thy slave Anena? Where is now thy coffer of coined gold? And where, good Hordedeef, where is now that dried-apple face of yours? And that baboon's body. Answer me that if you can, good Hordedeef!

Crossing to his island in a hackney boat, I found Hordedeef. He sat on a palm-stick couch in the shade of a carob tree, eating figs and smacking his lips. I told him that I wished to buy a young woman. He looked at me, grinned and waddled off like an old gray monkey. Presently he came back with an ancient Kabyle woman whose arms were like withered dhoura stalks. I did not look at her but said again patiently that I wished to buy a young woman. He took the creature away and returned with a fat black wench from the Soudan. I scowled and spat upon the ground, and he took her away also, grinning. So it went. He brought many women before me — some of them, too, were young and very beautiful — but I never looked at them, for I did not see the one whom I sought.

"You are hard to please," said Hordedeef.

"Have you no others?" I asked him. And he answered me, "None but a young girl already contracted to Sebkhi, the eldest son of Senesu, the jewel merchant."

"Let me then see her," said I. "Perhaps I will offer you a greater price."

Hordedeef laughed and mocked me. "What," he cackled, "you offer a greater price? Know you not that Sebkhi wallows in gold? And that the girl is the daughter of an Arab king stolen subtly in her childhood? And that even then I paid for her a hundred rings of coined gold? Much also have I spent on her up-bringing and education. In a month, when she shall have turned fifteen, Sebkhi pays me three hundred pieces of coined gold and takes her to his house."

Well might Hordedeef mock me, for the sale of all my goods had brought me scarce a tenth that sum. I got me home again from his island and all day I sat in my house, gnawing my fingers and cursing the gods and weeping tears.

Again that night I did not sleep. Toward morning, being

as it seemed, altogether mad, I went to the river, and giving thought neither to the crocodiles, the quicksands, nor the broad waters of the Nile, I plunged in boldly. For long I swam. Once, an undercurrent dragged me down, once I felt the thick slimy nose of a crocodile nuzzling my thigh, and once breath failed me — yet none the less I at last gained the island and lay down exhausted in a thicket of flowering acacia.

There I slept the morning through. Waking at noon, I lay for a time languid as a dozing cat. The great white flowers of the acacia shed their peace and perfume over me; the rays of Phra, the sun, gleamed down golden through the pale green fronds, drying my garments and breathing balm upon my harried soul. Rising at length I crawled to the edge of the thicket, peeped out warily and behold! Again the god had guided me.

For there, in a sunlit space among the trees, was Anena herself — Anena and a great strutting peacock. She held out a bit of cake and the fowl craned his neck for it. Then, just as his beak came close, she snatched it away again, mocking him. Whereat the great fowl spread his tail and screamed with rage like a drunken devil. Thrice she thus goaded his hunger and mocked his wrath, laughing and laughing yet again. Then, wearying of the sport, she tossed the cake to him and was about to turn away when I spoke to her. I spoke to her softly. I do not remember what I said or what she answered, or what — yes in truth I do remember, but it is of no moment.

Anena did not go away. She sat on the grass and talked with me. She had never before talked with a man, save only with Hordedeef and his servants and Sebkhi — Sebkhi, whose face was the face of a tunny fish and whose hair was dyed; Sebkhi, to whom she was contracted and whom she loathed as she loathed a toad. Anena sat with her hands clasped about her knees and talked with me. Her hands were little, like the hands of a child. When she spoke to me her voice trembled like the strings of a harp when the harper is sad. When she looked at me, her long eyes closed and opened like the petals of a mimosa when one touches them. The lids of her eyes were gilded with gold; the white linen fillets about her temples were caught with round

temple-studs wrought curiously of jade and ivory; in her hair was a jewel of green malachite. Anena was beautiful when I first saw her sitting on the barge-landing at dusk. Anena was twice beautiful when I spoke with her under the flowering acacias at noon. Hidden in the leaves above us, a little dove murmured and murmured yet again, but never once stirred from his covert; before us on the river-bank, an ibis ran up and down like a boy on stilts, catching frogs; to and fro about us, a gaudy little humming-bird reeled dizzily from white flower cup to white flower cup like some dainty drunkard of the air, rousing the loud anger of many bees. I forgot Sebkhi; I forgot that I had sold my boat vainly; I forgot Hordedeef and all loathsome things. Yet was I not mad, but guided and guarded of a god.

For lo! Of a sudden I heard loud shoutings, and there, running swiftly toward me came old Hordedeef and a score of his hirelings, armed with spears. By Phra, his godhead, that was not a coming to be tarried. I leaped to my feet, ran to the river-bank, and as I plunged in, a javelin came hurling past my ear. I swam under water, coming up for breath only when my chest seemed like to burst, and then most warily. None the less, they twice sighted me and twice an arrow splashed the water close by. Then the arrows stopped, and looking back, I saw them at the barge-landing loosing a boat. I gave myself up for fish-meat then. And then it was that the god lifted his hand. For when I looked back again, still had they not pushed off, but stood on the step of the barge-landing, pointing at the water, waving their arms, and shouting to one another. I swam on blindly, and more weary than a beaten galley slave, gained the shore. I drew myself up out of the water and lo! My body was red as with blood. Yet upon my body there was no wound. And when I looked at the river, behold that too was everywhere red like blood. I lie not. From the bank as far as one could see, the river ran red — red like blood. Thus had the god lifted his hand; therefore had Hordedeef been afraid to push forth his boat. This thing is a true thing. It lives in the memory of all men. For seven days and seven nights the river ran red — red like blood.

That night there was murmuring and muttering and the gathering of throngs throughout the city. Everywhere men said vain things, imagining evil. Here a stout rascal stood with clenched fists upraised and cursed the tribes of Ethiopia that had stained the river at its headwaters with slaughter of unclean beasts sacrificed. There in the market place a woman ran to and fro screaming that Osiris had herself been wounded by a god from the moon bent on conquest, and bled in defense of her people. Yonder a doddering gray-beard stood on a housetop and prophesied the end of the world and the death of all the gods. Only in the quarter of the Jews was there quiet — the quiet of those that have knowledge. There it was said that Moses, their leader, had with the aid of a strange, high and nameless god, done this thing in order to strike terror to the hard heart of Pharaoh and thus secure the release of the Jews from bondage. And indeed, it may be that they had truth, for in the temple all the high priests were gathered before Pharaoh in contention with this Moses, and there were prayers, sacrifices and subtle incantations without pause or number. Yet it is true that one cannot be certain, for everywhere men said vain things, imagining evil.

There followed that great season of wrath, when all the world was darkened with the mad strife of the gods. The tale of that time is known to all men. How for seven days and seven nights the river ran red as with blood. How all Egypt was smitten, now by celestial sendings of frogs, of lice and of pestilent flies; now by a murrain upon the beasts; anon by a plague of boils and blains upon mankind. How hurricanes of hail beat down the flax and barley; how the east wind bore upon us swarming myriads of locusts that blackened the sky and left not one blade of herbage in all great Egypt. How the green kingdom of Pharaoh became desolate as the salt lands of Sekhat Hemat, dry as the dusty solitudes of the Sahara, black as the poisoned wastes beyond the Mountains of the Moon. This is known of all men and I dwell not on it, for the evil of that season has seared blind the eyes of retrospection.

During all this accursed time moreover, I never saw Anena, for the guard of Hordedeef now patrolled the shores of his island

incessantly. All day I would sit on the river-bank, gazing out with strained and ardent eyes across the water. All night I would lie sleepless on my bed, gnawing my fingers, cursing curses, and weeping bitter tears. Yet at last, when it seemed certain that the end of the world was upon us, though I lost all hope, I lost all fear also — save for Anena. For, looking across the water after the plagues of hail and of locusts, I could see that the island of Hordedeef, the slave-merchant, was now no longer green but black — black like a great mummy that is wrapped in wrappings of pitch. Therefore, late one night, fearing for the safety of Anena and thinking also that it were as well to die fighting the hirelings of Hordedeef as to fall like a butchered ram under the immanent stroke of the gods, I tied a sharp knife to my neck, and for the third time slipped into the waters of the Nile.

Again I gained the island just before dawn and landed cautiously behind the back of the watchman on the shore. Yet though I won a landing, it seemed certain that the sowing of my madness would at last yield its harvest of death, for the leafless herbage now afforded me no shelter. Seeking concealment, I trod warily about, but the dawn pursued me relentlessly, and at last when groping along a wall I had stumbled into an open place before the gate of Hordedeef's house, the sun rose up over the river and denounced me to three black Ethiopians that lay in the doorway like hounds on guard. They leaped to their feet with a shout; hoping only to use my knife once or twice before I died, I set my back to the wall and waited. They gathered close together, made ready their weapons and were about to rush upon me when lo! A black veil of darkness fell between us so that one could not so much as see his hand before his face. Thus for a second time had the god lifted his hand and guarded me. I lie not. The thing is known of all men. For three days a starless darkness lay over all Egypt, and everywhere men cried out that Phra was dead, was dead.

My enemies shouted aloud in wonder, then hushed their cries for fear. I myself, who had lost both hope and fear alike, sank to my knees from fright and felt my heart knocking against my ribs like the hammer of a gold-beater. For an instant I

crouched there, and such a stillness lay over all the world that I could hear the breathing of my enemies — and the chattering of their craven teeth. Then treading lightly, with hands outstretched before my face, I moved away softly through the gloom.

How long I wandered, whether moments or hours or days, I may not know. Neither in fear nor in hope, but with a high heart and an uplifted head, I set out to seek whatever thing it was that the gods had in store for me. Up and down I strode, heedless where I went, seeking only Anena. Now silent, now calling on the name of Anena, now even chanting aloud the Hymn of Propitiation, I passed onward — through glades unswarded, through gardens barren of verdure, through groves of trees whose black, gnarled and hateful branches stretched up to the starless sky as the arms of men tortured are uplifted in appeal to Serapis. Through doorways and into houses, under archways, through corridors and into inmost seclusions, I moved unseen, like a hungry hound. Sometimes I came upon huddled groups of slaves and guards whom fear had intermingled; sometimes I stumbled over dim figures crouching solitary in corners. None spoke to me; the silence was as the silence of the dark catacombs in some vast necropolis. None stirred abroad but I — I and certain great stupid bats whose warm, hairy wings now and then brushed against me.

Yet at last I found Anena. She sat on the topmost step of a stairway, crying to herself like a child that has lost its way at night. When she heard my voice calling, she answered; and when I came to her, she clung to me, sobbing softly. When I saw Anena first, sitting on the barge-landing at dusk, I loved her. I loved her yet more when I talked with her under the sweetly flowering acacias at noon. But when she clung to me there in the darkness, in the thick and black night, then was my heart wholly in her hands.

For long we did not speak. Then for a little time we talked together in whispers. And then it was that hope was born anew in my breast. I told my plan to Anena. She gave assent and bade me wait there without moving while she made herself ready. She disappeared, groping her way along the wall of the

staircase in the darkness. Half mad with anxiety, I waited her return. After long she came again, laden with baskets of raiment and a small but weighty coffer. When I asked her what this latter contained, she laughed consumedly.

The island was so well known to Anena that she feared not to traverse it even in the darkness. I took upon me her burdens, and, leading me by the hand, she groped her way down the staircase, through corridor and gate and narrow path, even to the barge-landing. None hindered us or raised his voice, for all upon the island, both slave and slave-master and slave-guard, were smitten blind and helpless with fear. Only Anena and I, whom the god guided and guarded, were without fear.

We found a boat, embarked, and though the darkness veiled east and west alike, we pushed off boldly. The journey was long, yet we did not falter, and at last gained the shore and the city. We passed through the black and empty streets and never once so much as stumbled. We came to my house and entered in. Thus did I bring home Anena — in the twilight, in the darkness, in the thick and dark night. Thus twice had the god guided and guarded me. The third and greatest marvel was yet to come.

On the fourth day, as is known, the darkness lifted and men thronged the streets, babbling of the miracle. Again it was said that Moses, the high priest of the Jews, had with the aid of Jehovah, their god, caused this darkness in order to strike terror to the hard heart of Pharaoh and cause him to release the Jews from bondage. Many other vain things were said also, but I gave little heed, for Anena was in my house — Anena and a coffer of coined gold that the little dove had stolen from old Hordedeef and brought with her. These were my concern and I kept my door well barred against the certain coming of Hordedeef and Sebkhi.

And at dusk some days after the lifting of the darkness, they came — Hordedeef and Sebkhi and a friend of Sebkhi, the eldest son of a captain of the guard. All that day, there had been rites, sacrifices and all manner of ceremonial among the Jews. My house stands over against the Jewish quarter and at

dusk that day I stood in the doorway watching them, Anena peeping over my shoulder. Each Jew stood in the door of his house with a bunch of hyssop and a basin filled with blood of sacrifice. In unison and with muttered prayers, each Jew dipped the bunch of hyssop in the basin and therewith bedaubed both the doorposts and lintel of his dwelling with blood. Standing in my own doorway to watch this strange rite, I heard all at once a rush of feet and there, running at me with drawn weapons, came Hordedeef, Sebkhi, and Sebkhi's friend.

Perhaps made more eager because of his lost coffer of gold, old Hordedeef came somewhat in advance, a long knife in his hand, the foam of rage dripping from his lips. My doorway is narrow; my arm is strong. I caught him by wrist and hair, bent back his head, and wrenching away the knife, drove it deep into his throat. Then stepping back, I hurled the limp body like a sack of meal into the face of Sebkhi and sent him reeling back into the arms of his friend. Ho, Hordedeef, friend Hordedeef, how thy red blood spouted up — delicately, like a little courtyard fountain! As I slipped back inside and barred the door, I laughed aloud to see that doorpost and lintel alike were painted gaudily red, like those of the Jews. And as Sebkhi and his friend hurled themselves against the barred door, I mocked them with taunts, with gibes and with incontinent laughter.

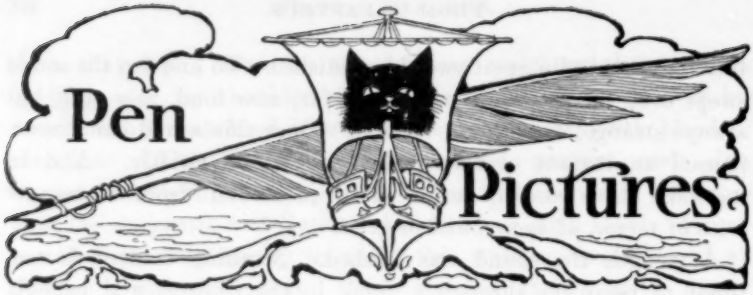
Yet when they ceased their attack upon the door, I abated my merriment also, save for such feigned cheerfulness of countenance as was needful to reassure Anena, for I knew Sebkhi to be cunning and relentless. I knew that he would now lie in wait for me until I should leave my house; and when I heard soft footsteps on the roof, I knew that his friend was waiting there to hurl a knife at me whenever I should venture into the courtyard to draw water. Yet twice had the god guarded me — me, all undeserving. And therefore, though Fear sat beside me, he crept not into my heart.

Night fell and deep darkness. From the quarter of the Jews there came an uproar of chanted hymns and of multitudes murmuring prayers. Awaiting the attack of Sebkhi, I sat with Anena, sleepless. Midnight came and lo! Over the city there reverberated a dreadful sound, like the clangor of iron pinions,

like the sound of a great sword brandished. To and fro the sound swept over the city now near, now far, now loud, now soft, but always strange, deadly and terrible. Once this sound came near, paused an instant overhead, then passed on swiftly. And in its wake there rose up cries from men and from women — cries of terror, of agony, and of grief.

At length the sound was hushed. Morning came. I ventured to peep out through a crack in the shutter, and behold! There in the street, not far from the carcass of old Hordedeef, lay the body of my enemy Sebkhi, the eldest son of Senesu, the jewel merchant — stricken dead, it seemed, by that winged demon of the night. And when I ventured warily up on the house-top, there, too, lay the body of his friend, slain likewise by that silent hound of Serapis. And when I paused there and listened, lo! From one house I heard a young wife wail that her baby was dead, was dead. And from another, an old man likewise cried out that his son was dead, was dead. And from all over the city, save from the quarter of the Jews, voices joined in a universal lamentation of their dead. I lie not. This thing is known of all men. How, after eight bitter plagues had failed to move the hard heart of Pharaoh to release the Jews from bondage, a demon sent by their god slew the first-born of every house in Egypt, save only in the houses of the Jews — and in mine. Thus for the third time their god guarded me.

Hail, Horus! Hail, Osiris! Hail, most bountiful Isis! Hail, Typhon and Nephthys! Hail, all gods to me unknown! But above these, my gods, shall praise be given to Jehovah of the Jews, for most curiously have I been cloaked in the mantle of his favor!



The Weirdest Land on Earth.*

No. II.

The Living Foes of the Woolgrower.

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

Of the Australian Woolgrowers' many living foes the white-eyed crow, the rabbit, and the dingo overshadow all others. These form a trinity of terrors that the sheep-breeder never forgets and never forgives. He wars on them relentlessly but hopelessly. Poison, gun, and trap are used unsparingly, but so great are the odds that the results are discouraging. This ever multiplying trinity, in conjunction with drought, will in a single year pull the wool king from affluence to the bankruptcy court and damn his soul by provoking unavailing blasphemy by their incessant attacks. In one season alone nearly twenty million sheep succumbed to the drought and their carcasses supplied the banquets of the crow.

And the Australian crow is a bird accursed. He is the arch criminal of the feathered tribe — the black, glossy fiend of a drought-stricken land. He stands apart from his brethren in all other parts of the world. He is the demon of death, and the bushman's hatred of him is immeasurable. It surpasses all hates. The spectacle of flocks of blinded lambs that are still alive, but whose eyes and tongues have provided dainty titbits for the ghoul's feast, does not develop love. The pitiful sight of weak, starving ewes circling round and round their helpless offspring in a vain attempt to protect them from the bird's fiendish at-

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tacks, stirs a hate that never dies. The crow is regarded as a devil in feathers.

And when King Drought rides over the land this bird of ill omen waxes fat and insolent. He dines gloriously. He gorges himself until he cannot fly, and the infuriated stockmen club him as he waddles helplessly around the live lambs whose tongues and eyes have provided the gorge. From morning till night the black legions offer up a thanksgiving chant over the tens of thousands of animals that perish for want of water. The blue, sticky mud around the fast-drying waterholes of the interior grips the weak sheep that has dragged itself many weary miles and struggles towards the stagnant, slime-covered centre of the bog, where the crow holds royal banquets. They cannot escape him then. The unfortunate animals have not strength to extricate themselves, once they are bogged. Each day they have dragged themselves over an ever-increasing distance to the waterholes. The land for miles around the tanks becomes as bare as a billiard table, even the roots of the grass have been devoured, and each day brings the famishing flocks nearer to the crow's banqueting board.

The army of "jackeroos" as the men employed for the crows' destruction are called, armed with guns, are unable to protect the starving flocks from the attacks. They can but skin the eyeless carcasses that stand rigid in the mud that hardens under the tropical sun like cement around the animals' legs. The wool king gets the pelt — the crow gets the carcass. It is no wonder that the bushman despises the crow. It is no wonder that in his frenzy he has been known to act on the Biblical code of an Eye for an Eye, and deliberately pierce the eyes of captured crows. He sees in him the incarnation of everything that is unclean and devilish.

And the crow has tastes above sheep. In the wastes of the Never Never country; on the gray, waterless stretches that run towards the Darling; on the lonely tracks of the Overland, he will follow the staggering, thirst-maddened bushman and patiently await the inevitable end. The crow knows the distance to the nearest water. He knows whether the unfortunate one can reach it. He signals to friends that there is a feast in sight,

and the bushman curses as he sees them collect and pursue. The man knows the crow's superior intelligence, and he moves his parched lips in bitter curses when they gather round. And when finally the doomed mortal stretches himself under a tree after making his last effort, the enemy, perched high above him, exercises his devilish cunning in making elaborate tests to find if life is extinct. He will drop small pieces of dead branches or bark down upon the motionless traveler, and if that fails to stir him, the evil bird descends lower and lower and — well, the white-eyed crow has participated in some grim obsequies in the dead heart of the Australian continent.

The rabbit is the wool king's nightmare. Bunny owns the land from the Pacific to the Indian, from Torres Straits to the Great Australian Bight. A glance at the atlas will tell any one what that means. The Seven Plagues of Egypt are small affairs compared to the rabbit invasion. In twenty years he has increased so rapidly that the question in Australia to-day is whether the land will belong to the rabbit or the sheep. The " milk and honey " phrase has been changed to " bilk and bunny " by the annoyed sheep-breeders, and there is no relief for them in sight.

There is no race suicide in the rabbit's code. He increases with marvelous rapidity. A single pair will, in a surprisingly short period, produce enough offspring to undermine a sheep run, and compel the breeder to shift his flocks in search of pastures new. They sweep over the land in uncountable swarms. Eighty million were destroyed in one year, but still they are increasing rapidly. The different states have tried in vain to protect their boundaries against the invasion, but still the rabbit gets in somehow. New South Wales erected a rabbit-proof fence of three hundred and fifty miles on the line which separates it from South Australia, and one of two hundred miles to protect its northern border, and yet New South Wales is to-day one of the worst rabbit-infested states of the Commonwealth. Woolgrowers are in despair.

There are sixty thousand miles of netting of one and one-half inch mesh, forty-two inches high, erected around the different runs in that state alone, yet the rabbit defies all precautions. The net-

ting costs two hundred dollars a mile, the English manufacturers are twelve months behind in filling orders.

But while the sheep-breeder is suffering under the plague, another class of people is delighted. The rabbit has provided work for thousands. England affords a good market, and great steamers, equipped with enormous refrigerating plants, carry cargoes of a quarter of a million carcasses round the Cape of Good Hope to London. It is a sixteen-thousand-mile run, but the prices warrant it.

Men, women and children work at trapping. Children earn as much as twelve dollars a week, and education inspectors complain bitterly about the falling off in the school attendance when the rabbits make their way into a new district. Bunny stimulates trade. Dealers in carcasses and pelts follow the advancing army, and money is plentiful. On this account any stringent methods of eradication are viewed with suspicion by those who live by trapping. The visit of the renowned French scientist, Dr. Danysz of the Pasteur Institute, proved a fiasco. The doctor proposed to destroy Bunny by means of inoculation, but the Parliamentary Labor Party, thousands of whose supporters are earning a living by capturing the rabbit, made it impossible for him to carry his plans into effect. Danysz was disgusted, and the sheep men curse.

The dingo or native dog, when considered singly, is the worst foe of the unfortunate sheep-breeder. On that account he carries the highest scalp tax of all noxious animals. His scalp brings from one dollar to ten, according to the part of the country in which he is killed, and the animal tries to make the Stock Boards feel that the money is expended wisely. To kill or maim one sheep or a dozen sheep brings him no enjoyment. In one frolic he will maim five hundred. He finds enjoyment in running the fat ewes till they fall dead from exhaustion, and he will leave his teeth marks on each one of his victims. For pure cussedness the dingo leads by many lengths. The loss of sheep from native dogs in one year has exceeded a million.

Kangaroos, wallabies, hares, bandicoots, wallaroos, pademelons, and kangaroo rats all carry a scalp tax running from two cents to twelve cents per scalp, and tens of thousands of dollars are

paid yearly to trappers — tens of millions of dollars have been paid for the extermination of noxious animals in this Weirdest Land on Earth. The kangaroo shooter, if anyway diligent, can earn a good living by killing the animals for their skins alone, and hundreds of men obtain a livelihood in this way. The big drives, in which thousands of kangaroos were slaughtered, are now a thing of the past, but in the outback district the " roo " is still plentiful.

And so the wool king suffers. His struggles are unceasing. Fire, drought, the rabbit and other noxious animals make his life a continual fight to the death, but he wins out somehow. He is the backbone of the country, and his is the victory. The five capital cities that the globetrotter knows of have not earned for Australia the title of the Land of the Golden Fleece. The man on the land did that — the man who doesn't know of the iced soda and brandy and electric fans — the man who fights the rabbits and the crows in the Silence, in the desert, in the waterless hell of the interior.

NOTE. — THE BLACK CAT for April will contain a third Pen Picture on The Weirdest Land on Earth. It will deal with the Gathering of The Golden Fleece by that vast suntanned Army of the Outback — The Stockmen, Shepherds, Shearers and "Sundowners."

"CATECHISMS"

Hand to Mouth Hints for those who thirst for the Milk of Human Kindness, and Heart to Heart Talks that will lead them from the Wrong Road into the Right Path.

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When, where, and by whom was the turning over of a new leaf first accomplished? LULU.

1. On the Eve of the year one. 2. Under a fig tree. 3. Adam.

To decide a wager will you please state whether anywhere in history or poetry it is recorded that Clay, Honey, and Poison enter into the make-up of woman and if so what, if anything, the Devil had to do with it? MELVILLE.

It is a historical fact that a famous Persian poet wrote: — In the beginning Allah took a rose, a lily, a dove, a serpent, a little honey, a Dead Sea apple, and a handful of clay. When he looked at the amalgam it was woman. He decided to make a change. But it was too late as Adam had taken her for his wife. And here is where Satan stepped in and pointed out that the rose had a thorn; the lily was fragile; the dove was timid; the serpent retained its guile, fangs, and venom; the honey clogged; the Dead Sea apple was filled with dust, and the clay was tough, difficult to blend, and impossible to eliminate.

In the best society what do guests at leading Metropolitan hotels usually order for breakfast? As I have never been away from home and am going to New York on my bridal tour I shall appreciate any helpful hint. I am eighteen and my health is good. FLOSSIE.

That depends. Should the hotel at which you stop be conducted on the European plan you will write out this order: — Coffee, Rolls, and Boiled Eggs. If, on the other hand, the American plan obtains, ask the waiter to bring you the following: —

Hot House Grapes Blood Oranges
Oatmeal — Cream
Bread Rolls Corn Muffins Scones
Chocolate
Broiled Salmon Creamed Potatoes
Omelet with Mushrooms
Porterhouse Steak — Grilled Sweet Potatoes
HOT WAFFLES — MAPLE SYRUP

If your health is *very* good, a Jumbo Squab on toast may precede the steak. Take the oranges to your room.

What is Poetic License anyway? EVALINA.

The assumption on the part of heart hungry poets like Byron that long haired men of letters may monkey with matrimony without a license.

Will you please state whether the streets of New York were ever immortalized by a poet and if so how?

Yes, by the lines:

"Your streets are not passable—
Not even Jackassable."

Please give a beautiful example of selfish and unselfish love?
CATHERINE.

"There was once a man who loved a woman. He gave her everything he possessed, even his soul. Still unsatisfied, she said to him, 'I want the heart of your mother: bring it to me.' He did as directed, and running back to her, stumbled and fell. As the heart rolled in the dust it cried out in pain, 'Did'st hurt thyself, my son?'"

Where, when and by whom was the best throw with a boomerang made? And what was the record? DIANA.

In Australia. During the visit of the American fleet. By King Boorakula of Northern Queensland. Being refused a drink by a Boomanoomana Publican His Highness stepped into the street and after carefully examining his boomerang sent it on its flight. The curiously carved weapon circled the hotel three times, crashed through the front entrance, knocked seventeen bottles from the shelves, blackened the Publican's eye, passed through the rear window, killed a laughing Jackass on its flight to the harbor, where it encircled the entire fleet and came to grief only when, on its return trip, it essayed to round up a merry widow hat in the conning tower of the Flagship.

In the best society which is correct:
The artist's model as she appears to the naked eye

or

The artist's model as she appears to the eye naked? ROSALIND.

That depends altogether on the altogether.